United Nations S/PV.7716

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7716th meeting
Tuesday, 14 June 2016, 4.20 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Lamek	(France)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Japan	Mr. Okamura
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Spain	Mr. Gasso Matoses
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Méndez Graterol

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Letter dated 8 June 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/510)

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The meeting was called to order at 4.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Letter dated 8 June 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/510)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Sudan to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2016/510, which congtains the text of a letter dated 8 June 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for this new opportunity to present a briefing to the Security Council on the situation in Darfur and the activities of African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID).

The special report (see S/2016/510) of the Secretary-General and of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission presents the results of the Darfur joint assessment mission by the African Union and the United Nations of the situation in Darfur and the steps to be taken to implement the UNAMID mandate, as well as the operational effectiveness of the military and police components of the mission. I will present the conclusions and recommendations that were the outcome of the joint assessment and the major events that have taken place since it was published, on 8 June.

The nature of the conflict in Darfur remains unchanged since the renewal of the mandate of the mission, for many reasons.

First, little progress has been made in finding a viable political solution to the conflict. The Government of the Sudan and the non-signatory armed movements have yet to reach consensus with regard to the role of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur in the negotiation process led by the piece High-level Implementation Panel of the African Union. On 30 and 31 May in Doha, UNAMID and the Government of Qatar consulted with the Justice and Equality Movement and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) to help achieve a rapprochement of the positions of the two parties. It is regrettable that the Abdul Wahid faction was absent from the negotiating table, and it which should be urged to engage constructively in achieving consensus. For now, the United Nations and the African Union have called on the Sudanese opposition to follow the road map proposed by the High-level Panel and signed by the Sudanese Government in April. If all stakeholders were to abide by the road map, that would undoubtedly lead to significant progress in the peace process, thereby opening the way for progress with regard to ceasefire negotiations in South Kordofan and Blue Nile states, the political process in Darfur and the national dialogue.

Secondly, there is the element of intercommunal violence, which are emanating from disputes over access to land, water and grazing areas, remains a major cause of insecurity in Darfur. That communal violence has also been exacerbated by the politicization of disputes, the degree to which communities are being armed, inadequate efforts — it must be said — to restore the rule of law, and the recurrent impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators of acts of violence. There have been four major incidents since January between Arab tribes and their neighbours — the Gimir and Masalit — in West Darfur, triggered by incidents of cattle rustling. On 22 May, for example, a member of an Arab tribe and a soldier of the Sudanese army were killed in Azerni, east of El Geneina, following the escalation of a dispute on the non-payment for services rendered, which escalated into an attack on a mosque in which six Masalit civilians were killed.

(*spoke in English*)

In the face of such violence, the Government, particularly at the State level, has taken measures to restore security by deploying additional forces to hot spots, enhancing mediation efforts, including between farmers and nomads, and planning a broad civilian disarmament campaign. Despite such efforts, however, the violence persists, as its underlying causes, which

are inherently linked to those of the broader Darfur conflict, are yet to be addressed.

Thirdly, while direct clashes between the Government and the armed movement forces have subsided as a whole, the fighting with the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid faction in Jebel Marra, which rejects any negotiations with the Government, has continued. In mid-January, the Government launched an aerial and ground offensive in parts of Central, North and South Darfur. The aim of that was to dislodge the SLA/Abdul Wahid from its strongholds in the mountainous area, which the latter resisted through asymmetric warfare and the high mobility of its forces.

While the Government stated in April that the rebellion had ended with the capture of Sorrong in Central Darfur, reports of clashes have continued, including indiscriminate attacks against the civilian population, which UNAMID could not verify due to a lack of access. Most recently, on 30 May, Abdul Wahid forces reportedly attacked the Sudanese armed forces positions east of Nertiti, in Guthrum in Central Darfur. Ground fighting and aerial bombardments followed, and continued until 5 June, with reports of casualties on both sides, as well as among civilians.

As of today, while 2.6 million people remain displaced across Darfur, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has reported 80,000 verified internally displaced persons (IDPs) since the resumption of fighting in the Jebel Marra area in mid-January. It has also received reports of as many as 127,000 additional displaced persons, but that number has not been verified, due to the lack of humanitarian access, particularly in Central Darfur. Furthermore, a total of 1.6 million civilians continue to reside in the region in some 60 camps for internally displaced persons. Although some of those displaced have returned to their homes, many have chosen to remain in camps or in urban areas. By the way, IDPs have largely voiced their rejection of the Government's plans to implement a voluntary process to end displacement by 2017. They cited for that the absence of security, stability, justice, access to basic services, compensation and issues with their land rights.

With respect to relations with the Government of the Sudan, UNAMID continued to face considerable challenges that impeded the implementation of its mandate, including denials of access and freedom of movement, particularly, as I already noted, to conflict areas such as Jebel Marra. Denials and delays in the issuance of visas and the clearance of shipment containers at Port Sudan have also continued. Delays in the clearance of military and police equipment, food rations and sustainment supplies remain a significant obstacle in that context. The African Union and United Nations, with the support of Security Council members, have consistently engaged the Government of the Sudan on those matters. At the latest tripartite meeting, held in Khartoum on 23 May, the Government reiterated its commitment to continue working with UNAMID on resolving those issues. More recently, the Sudanese ForeignMinister reiterated his Government's commitment to address those challenges. We very much hope that those assurances will result in much-needed progress on the ground.

Further to the request of their two Councils, the United Nations and African Union also continued their discussions with the Government on the development of an exit strategy for UNAMID based on the benchmarks. The Joint Working Group met from 12 to 22 May. The Working Group, which is made up of the three parties, visited the five states of Darfur and held discussions in Khartoum. They agreed on a general evaluation of the benchmarks and on recommendations whose implementation would provide elements for a gradual and phased exit strategy. However, the Joint Working Group did not reach consensus on the issue of the process leading to a possible reconfiguration of the mission. On 23 May, during the twenty-first tripartite meeting, which was also held in Khartoum, the three parties endorsed the outcome of the Joint Working Group and requested it to reconvene in four months to review the implementation of its recommendations and the benchmarks.

Given the current situation in Darfur, the joint assessment mission concluded that the strategic priorities of UNAMID and their corresponding benchmarks remained valid. Within that framework, the Chairperson and the Secretary-General therefore recommended for UNAMID to focus its activities, first, on protecting the displaced populations and, secondly, on addressing intercommunal violence more comprehensively.

In a situation of continuing armed conflict, intercommunal violence and attacks against civilians, the current security conditions in Darfur are not conducive to a large-scale return of IDPs to their places of origin. Any such return would have to be

voluntary, consented to, safe and accompanied by durable solutions. Building upon its current strategy for the protection of civilians, UNAMID would support the work of humanitarian partners and of the Sudanese authorities by providing protection to the displaced and prioritizing existing resources based on a mapping of the situation in the camps, the areas at risk for further displacement and potential areas of return across Darfur.

The sustainable resolution of intercommunal violence in Darfur would require a comprehensive political agreement that should recognize fully and uphold the rights of both farmers and nomads, empower local-level conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms and that should strengthen the capacity of the criminal justice system to maintain law and order and ensure accountability for crimes. UNAMID needs to continue engaging the Government of the Sudan on the need for those goals to be achieved. In the absence of a more long-term solution, however, UNAMID would build on its existing activities and develop a strategy bringing together all the relevant mission components to address some of the most pressing sources of violence through prevention and mitigation and, with the United Nations country team, support for the resolution of the underlying causes.

As part of the joint assessment, the African Union and the United Nations also conducted a review of the effectiveness of the military and police components. The review recommended for the current number of military and police personnel to be retained and for the mission to take measures to enhance its overall flexibility through the reinforcement of troops at the team sites having greater operational significance. In parallel, the reduction or closure of other team sites should take place and a highly mobile reserve military capability should be established while increasing the field presence of police officers from within existing capabilities.

While focusing on those issues will serve to enhance the impact of UNAMID's conflict resolution and protection mandated activities, their effect will remain limited in scope in the absence of further progress towards a comprehensive and sustainable political solution. We therefore continue to call upon all parties to continue efforts in good faith to achieve the much-needed cessation of hostilities in Darfur and to work towards ensuring a credible and inclusive national dialogue process.

Based on the status of the UNAMID benchmarks and pending the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Working Group, the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission therefore recommended for the two Councils to consider extending the mandate of UNAMID for 12 months, until 30 June 2017, without modification to its priorities or adjusting its authorized troop and police ceiling. I would note that yesterday the African Union Peace and Security Council endorsed that recommendation. I therefore wish to reiterate the Secretary-General's request for the Security Council to also do so.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Ladsous for his briefing and for his commitment.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for the report (see S/2016/510) presented to the Security Council on his behalf and on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Ladsous for his briefing. We reiterate that we will continue our full cooperation.

I would also like to express my sincere condolences to the Governments and the peoples of the United States and France for the terrorist attacks that happened in both countries recently. We condemn terrorism in all its forms. In that context, it gives us great pleasure to convey to Council members who are following-up that we will cooperate fully to defeat terrorism and eradicate its threat, side by side with the international community and the individual countries concerned. That is know to everyone.

The reality on the ground in Darfur does not conform with some of the contents of the report. The best proof is the work of the Joint Working Group on an exit strategy for UNAMID, which met on 24 May. That tripartite Group, made up of the Government of the Sudan, the African Union and the United Nations, visited Darfur to assess the situation. The mission travelled to all five states and met with representatives of the Governments, the displaced, the local authorities and the commanders of UNAMID.

In the report that was issued following its visit to Darfur, the Joint Working Group attested to the great improvement in the security situation following the

success of the Sudanese military forces in defeating the rebel movements and eradicating them from all the states of Darfur, with the exception of one region in western Jebel Marra. The report of the Joint Working Group also confirms the great effort made by the governors of all five Darfur states to provide security and prevent inter-communal disputes. That had great impact on decreasing the number of inter-communal conflicts and limiting their consequences, especially those occurring during the reporting period.

Thanks to the improved security situation, a huge increase was seen in voluntary returns of the displaced to their original villages. Statistics of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs show that more than 400,000 displaced persons have returned voluntarily and are benefiting from the security and basic services available for the returnees in villages set up by the brotherly State of Qatar and the League of Arab States and in line with the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur.

In addition, the Government of the Sudan has started implementing a plan to address the situation of the displaced in the camps and to take all the measures necessary for their voluntary return, or for transforming the camps and the necessary resources for those who want to remain.

Moreover, I would like to inform the Council that, during his short visit to New York last week, the Sudanese Minister for Foreign Affairs held a number of meetings with the Secretary-General and various persons interested in the situation in Darfur, during which he referred to the full engagement of the Government of the Sudan with the United Nations, UNAMID and all other actors in ensuring a comprehensive response to all the needs and demands of UNAMID and continue working together to respond to such requests, inter alia, involving visas, containers, customs duties and all other measures that we have addressed so far.

The administrative referendum in Darfur represented an important historical juncture with regard to the legal requirements set out in the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur, which set the proper basis to bring about peace and security in Darfur. We hope that the Council will adopt a supportive stance in view of those results. As witnessed by the entire world, the referendum took place in a conducive political and security environment that enabled the citizens of Darfur to exercise their right to register and to vote, thereby choosing the administrative formula they desire to govern Darfur. The process was conducted completely peacefully without a single security incident reported. That is yet further clear proof of the sustained improvement of the political and security situation there.

The Government of the Sudan has reiterated time and again that the establishment of UNAMID was the result of an agreement with the Government of the Sudan. A stipulation was made that the mission would consist mostly of African personnel to assist in maintaining peace and security in the Sudan. After almost a decade, we find that the need for UNAMID no longer exists in many parts of Darfur, as attested to by UNAMID commanders and forces. In that connection, I would like to refer the Council to the report of the Joint Working Group that was submitted to the strategic tripartite mechanism following its members' visit to Darfur in May. That proves the success of the African UNAMID force, which has achieved its objective by providing peace and stability.

Moreover, the Government of the Sudan calls for a drawing down of UNAMID forces in the areas where they are no longer needed — of which there are many. The starting point would be the areas agreed upon by all parties in West, South and North Darfur states. Such a drawdown could serve as a starting point in the implementation of the exit strategy gradually and smoothly, in phases. Following that, the duties of UNAMID would be transferred to the United Nations country team to implement the development projects to promote stability and peace in Darfur.

The Government of the Sudan has spared no effort in attempting to bring about comprehensive lasting peace throughout the country, thereby avoiding the scepter of war and conflict. In that context, the national dialogue initiative, launched by the President of the Republic last October, continued its meetings over more than three months and covered various issues. The different committees undertook their work in free and open settings, and then submitted their recommendations to the General Assembly for discussion. They are now awaiting their adoption and the start of implementation.

We are also providing the opportunity and the time for those who have abstained from joining the process. We hope that they will join soon so that we can complete the road map for building our nation on the basis of consensus and unanimity, while rejecting division.

Accordingly, I hope that the international community, foremost the Security Council, will bring pressure to bear on those who have abstained from participating so that they join the national dialogue, as well as to impose sanctions on all of those who have hindered the process or attacked UNAMID forces, as was the case involving the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid faction on 1 January, during which it attacked UNAMID forces with heavy weapons near Kutum, as described in the Secretary-General's report (S/2016/268) on UNAMID published on 22 March, which the Council considered on 6 April (see S/PV.7666).

In cooperation with the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, the Government of the Sudan attempted to reach a peace agreement with the opposition forces and the armed movements. The Government therefore signed the road map presented by the tripartite mechanism. However, the refusal and intransigence of the other party portend further violations and impediments to the peace process. The Council must take a clear position aimed at returning the opposition and the other remaining armed movements to the negotiating table by accepting the road map as a basis for the settling of all issues.

I see no alternative to giving full cognizance to the fact that Darfur today is free from all organized armed movements, as accurately defined in the 1977 Protocol II additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949. That fact has been recognized by the joint meetings involving the Government of the Sudan and the African Union, on the one hand, and the United Nations, on the other. Therefore, we must now allow any disassociation between the verified facts recognized in such joint meetings, as proved on the ground in Darfur, and the decision to be taken in a few days by the Council on UNAMID. We therefore call upon the Council to recognize the great progress achieved after the resumption of the Joint Working Group meeting on an UNAMID exit strategy — a group that bases its work primarily on resolution 1769 (2007), which established the mission in 2007.

To conclude, I would like to stress the unequivocal determination and readiness of my Government to cooperate and coordinate with UNAMID and all of its entities to enable the mission to fully undertake and implement its mandate. It is worth mentioning that the statistices included in the report of the Secretary-General, although contested, bear out such cooperation and the progress made with respect to the situation, particularly regarding the return of displaced persons. If issues remain in other areas, such as customs or other matters, it has nothing to do with any premeditated intention. We have demonstrated to the Council several times and with statistics the volume of that great cooperation.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.